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Swami Nem Pal's *India Malcontent*: Political Trends and Reflections

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Abstract

A thorough reading of *India Malcontent* gives the idea that Swami Nem Pal has poured his painful political experience into it. Swami Nem Pal is one of a few poets whose poetry deal with politics, patriotism, and the plight of the poor. Political principles are very ancient, and great sages preached them as well. It is true that the creation of art is influenced by the global political and ideological atmosphere, or that art is intimately related to humanity's everyday concerns and fears. Politics ruins a nation, as evidenced by the fact that traditional Indian writings such as the Rigveda and the Mahabhart, as well as Kashemendra's (11th century) satires and Bhartendu's (19th century) compositions, were penetrated by politics. Swami New Pal places a high value on fostering the scriptures' ideals: Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, or the truth, the good, and the beautiful. The poet addresses young men and encourages them to embody this ideal in their actions. This ethical triangle can be viewed in this manner. The truth is the measurement by which the good (Shivam) and the beautiful are measured (Sundaram). People should do well for others and avoid corruption and immorality in order to make the world a more lovely place. Virtues are not drugs to be prescribed, but they do need earnest efforts to cultivate into habits.

Keywords: *Political Trends, Indian writings, Rigveda, Swami New Pal, India Malcontent*

A close study of *India Malcontent* gives an impression that Swami Nem Pal has poured the grievous account of his political journey in it. Swami Nem Pal is one among a few poets who deal politics, patriotism and sufferings of the poor in their poems. Political ideas are very old and great sages also preached them. It is true that the development of art depends on the political and ideological climate of the planet or that art is directly linked with everyday cares and anxieties of humanity. Politics destroys a nation, which is a historical fact that such classical Indian works as the *Rigveda* and the *Mahabhart*, not to mention the satires of Kashemendra (11th century) or the works of Bhartendu (19th century) were permeated with political thought and the political passions of the day.

In *India Malcontent*, the poet has exposed the hypocritical mask of fiendish politicians in an incisive language. The book has been branched out in three parts :

Part I: It contains 23 pages. Significant standpoints regarding depravity of politicians, shocking antipathy of the rich and the politicians against the poor and horrible miseries of the poor, the farmers and the labourers are depicted with the poignancy of language.

Part II: It contains 97 poems in 14 pages. Poems are divested of titles, and the poet has employed dia-meter with rhyme scheme of ab, ab. Four-lines poems are addressed to the youths of India, and the poet infuses courage in them and motivate them to cause refinement in Indian politics and society.

Part III: It contains 645 poems having dia-meter (4 syllables) and ab, ab rhyme scheme. The poet addresses not only the youths but common people to live great ideals of life like love, fraternity, patriotism, peace, religious tolerance an (Pal)d morality.

It is noteworthy that Swami New Pal's poems have been interpreted with the norms of literary stylistics practiced by Geoffrey Leech (emphasizing cohesion, foregrounding and cohesion of foregrounding); Samuel Levin (emphasizing positional equivalence and natural equivalence); and J.P. Thorne, H.G. Widdowson who concentrate on discourse analysis.

In colloquial tone, the poet questions himself about the popularity of his poems in these lines:

"Dear readers kind !

Shall I impress

You taste refined

I cannot assess ? (Pal 1)

Syntactic deviation is apparent in this poem because of postposed adjectives (kind/ refined). Normally adjectives are placed before nouns they modify. Postposed adjectives are meant for end-rhyme (lines 1,3) here. "Adjectives can sometimes be post-positive, i.e. they can sometimes follow the item they modify. A postposed adjective (together with any complementation it may have) can usually be regarded as a reduced relative clause". 3

Poets enjoy linguistic freedom and they commit various linguistic deviations to bring novelty in expression. "Another freedom poets have enjoyed by custom is that of arranging syntactic elements in an irregular order "(HYPERBATON) : for example, placing an adjective after the noun it qualifies (readers kind) instead of before (kind readers)." (Greenbaum 116)

The poem is composed of dimeter (two feet : for syllables) and rhyme scheme is abab.

The poet advises the readers to ignore grammatical errors if feelings are conveyed in an appealing language:

"So do not count
Much words' defects
Most paramount
Are feelings, facts. (Pal 14)

In order to convey his message forcefully, the poet has structured semi-sentences which lack verb phrase. According to Bloomfield, "all languages distinguish two great sentence - types, full sentences and minor sentences". (Bloomfield 171) He further explains that favourite sentence form (full sentences)... consist of actor action phrases". (Bloomfield 172) Specifying the functions of minor sentences, Bloomfield writes; 'Minor--sentences seem to be either completive or exclamatory. The completive type consists of a form (mostly nominalized phrases) which merely supplements a situation.'" (Bloomfield 176)

Country's politics
Full of mischiefs
Evilsome tricks
Causes of griefs. (poem 32, page 29)

In above mentioned poem, there are semi- sentences without verbal element, and they violate selection restriction rules also. Semi-sentences are generated through the syntactic device of "nominalization transformation". The syntactic device of 'nominalization' transforms whole sentences into noun phrases". (Barabash 9)

Presumably, the semi-sentences are derived from the nominalization of underlying sentences consisting of the following deep structures:

Country's politics
Is full of mischiefs.
Evilsome tricks
Are causes of griefs. (Pal)

It maybe observed that the underlying sentences are specimens of redundant and prosaic statements. On the contrary, semi-sentences in nominalized forms work up the thematic precision and brevity of expression. Semi-sentences contain the relish of telegraphic sensibilities, and they expose the truth that the politics of corruption is the root of people's grief.

Creative imagination of a poet occupies key place in the composition of poems. In connection with the role of imagination, R.A. Scott-James has observed that "Its function is to diffuse, dissolve and recreate; to make external internal, fashioning new images in its own semblance." (Scott-James 225)

It is gathered from Swami Nem Pal's poems compiled in India Malcontent that the acute miseries of poor labourers and farmers; abuse of political powers by depraved leaders; mask of patriotism put on by selfish politicians; farce of democratic values and shocking antipathy of the millionaires and the corrupt politicians against the poor, downtrodden are the landscapes that fill poet's imagination. The poet extols first the great, selfless contribution of the farmers and the labourers to the cause of India's development, and then deplors their misfortunes in these lines:

"You have built this nation great

You labourers, farmers capable.

You are the masters but your fate

Is most heartrending and miserable" (Pal 4)

With the rhetorical figure apostrophe - you, the poet addresses farmers and labourers. There is a kind of linguistic irregularity known as HYPERBATON. (Leech 18) arrangement of syntactic elements in an irregular order for example, placing an adjective after the noun it qualifies (nation great/ farmers capable) instead of before (great nation, capable farmers). By means of hyperbaton, the poet has sustained rhyme and highlighted the meritorious contribution of farmers and labourers. The repetition of pronoun 'you' causes not only alliteration but also highlights the great importance of the selfless, sincere services of the farmers and labourers who live in miseries.

The poet reminds people that Mahatma Gandhi also worked for the poor and the downtrodden, but farmers and labourers have been ignored and neglected in the modern democracy of India as a fashion:

'Tis you for whom was Gandhi born
'Tis you for whom he fought life long
'Gainst the fashion over worn
In our country and gainst the wrong (Pal 4)

But your services of the past
Which caused in country vicissitudes
Have been by age ignored at last
Which leaves you suffering multitudes. (Pal 4)

Candidly and directly, the poet ventilates his poetic resentment at the flouting of Gandhi's ideals by notorious politicians:

'Tis no India of Gandhi's dream
'Tis no society which he fed
Where his teachings discarded seem;
Where his ideals lie shot dead (Pal 4)

Last two lines of this poem carry linguistic deviance. Verb 'seem' is extraposed at the end, and this linguistic irregularity is called 'hyperbaton. (Leech 18) The collocation of ideals 'with shot dead' is unusual and it results in semantic deviation. The verbal group 'lie shot dead' requires a subject having +human, +animate, +concrete features but the thematic subject 'ideals contain +abstract, -concrete features. Owing to semantic deviation, this foregrounded sentence connotes that politicians are chary of Gandhian ideals and they shoot those persons who follow Gandhian ideals. Frankly, the poet reproaches corrupt people and political criminals who have spoilt the prestige of nation: "No nation so morally decayed/on this earth today stands". (Pal 5)

The best catalogue poem is quoted here. On the strength of rare combinations of words, it sounds a terrible poem which shows the horrors of extreme poverty.

And there from a hole under piles

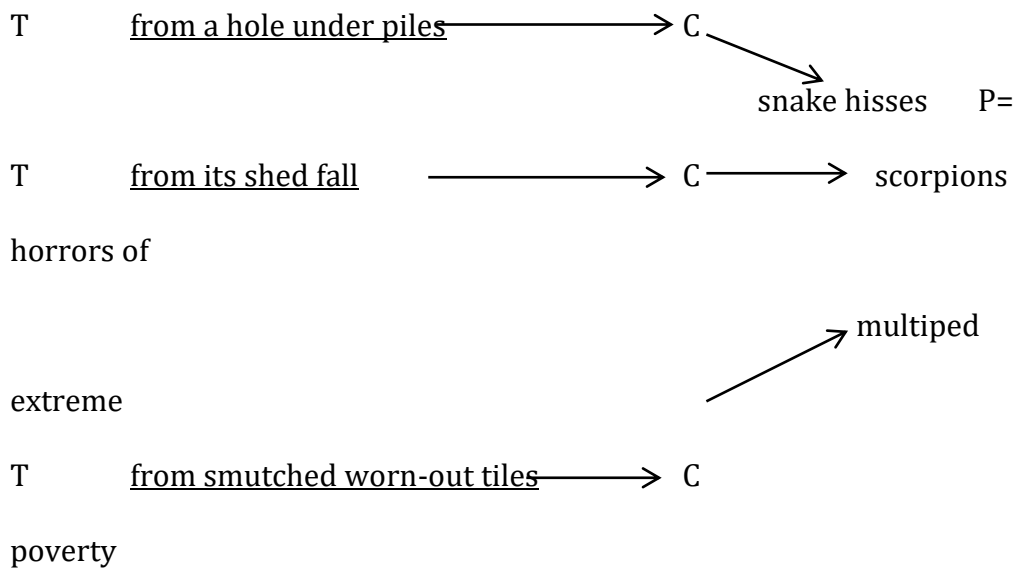
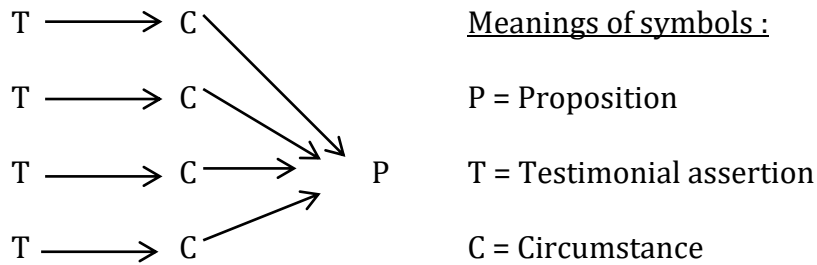
Snake hisses, or from its shed

Or from smutched worn-out tiles

Fall scorpions or multiped. (Pal 12)

Applying Wigmore's13 Argument Diagram concerning Argumentation, theory, it can be proved that the poem presents the horrors of extreme poverty.

Wigmore's Evidence Diagram



In order to prove the proposition, a chain of inferences having structural correctness are to be gathered, examined through inductive standard and gained probative weight. In connection with the evidence which are transparent, certain chains of inferences are structured thus:

- 1.The dwelling place is a shanty, which is open and unsafe.
- 2.The dwelling place is made of piles (timber) to support the shed.
- 3.The shed and piles used as a make shift place belong to the poor.
- 4.Condition of living is extreme poverty.
- 5.The locations of horrible objects are a hole under piles, shed and smutched, worn-out tiles.
- 6.The objects of horror are snake, scorpions, multipeds.
- 7.The objects of horror are dangerous to the poor.

After examining the relevant chain of inferences well connected to one another, the probative weight relies upon scorpions, snake and multiped that are conclusive of the horrors of poverty.

It is noteworthy that Swami Nem Pal's picturesque and telling description of the horrors of extreme poverty is more powerful than Thomas Gray's famous democratic pastoral elegy "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard. Thomas Gray deliberates upon the helplessness, dreary luck of the rural people who were deprived of opportunity and support of society. Here the matter of Indian rural poverty is nonpareil in which the poor are constrained to live in the company of hissing snakes, poisonous scorpions and multiped.

A mockery of democratic ideals is stated with symbolic subtlety in this poem :

Under the safeguard of these rights

Fundamental millionaires thrive;

Poor fill their bellies with granites

And for such life aggrieved strive. (Pal 17)

The poet does not shirk from deriding the triviality of fundamental rights rotting in the pages of Indian constitution. Metrical ingenuity lies in line 1 and 2 as they exhibit "enjambment - a striding over". Adjective fundamental belongs to first line, but it is carried over to second line. As usual for him, the poet makes an effective use of hyperbaton by placing adjective after the noun rights it qualifies. Foregrounding of enjambment and hyperbaton at the same juncture

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suggests a good deal of crude realities. Adjective 'fundamental' post modified by the noun 'millionaires' rather than pre-modifying 'rights' implies two facts :

(i)Only millionaires are fundamental to the cause of Indian democracy but not the poor ;

(ii)Only millionaires are born and authorized to enjoy immensely the benefits of fundamental rights.

The verb phrase "fill their bellies with granites" signifies a lot of imports as analysed and illustrated here :

(a)The fundamental right left only for the poor is that they are doomed to earn their one-time bread by constructing palatial mansions for the rich ;

(b)The poor are born to pound the hard block of granite (their bad luck is harder than granite) and eat to their fill the granite grits and dust in place of bread;

(c)The millionaires are born to despise the poor as the heart of the former is harder than granite.

The ugly behaviour of the rich, the base character of self-centered politicians, the horrible miseries of the poor, downtrodden and the exquisite beauty of nature-all these, perspectives have permeated through Swami Nem Pal's innovative poetry. For the proper understanding of Swami Nem Pal's aesthetic perceptions, certain terms are defined here. In his significant book, Aesthetics, 15 Yuri Borev points out that "The ugly is an aesthetic characteristic of the objects whose natural properties have a negative significance for society at the present level of its development. (Barabash 87) "The base is the extreme degree of the ugly and a highly negative quality. It is embodied in the negative forces which are a menace to humanity... If a man does not control his own social relations, this spells disaster," (Barabash 88) There is an unevenness in society in village and town : the rich prosper and the poor live in humiliation :

Society on a rugged surface

Moves in every village and town

Rich climbs higher up with blithe face

Poor still grovels lower down. (Pal 5)

With insect imagery, the poet points the ugliness of society which tortures the poor as unruly children kill worms mercilessly :

As worms by wanton children's feet
Are crushed, they never think and feel
Society does so poor men treat
quashes them under its iron heel. (Pal 6)

Winter with its biting chill
With mist and hoarfrost snow,
With all its tortures would them kill
And thus give them a fatal blow.

The rich in their buildings aloft
In their cosy squabs snore;
And warm repose they in down soft
Feeling bliss to their very core. (Pal 7)

The painful life of the poor is contrasted with the luxurious life of the rich. Death dealing winter storms torture the poor, whereas the rich snore in their fluffy quilt in warm nights. Here is the beautiful picture of winter.

They, day and night, for a crust stale
Of bread load their lives with toil
On shoulders carry afflictions' bale
And hardship would their animus foil. (Pal 10)

It is a noteworthy point here that the psychology of artistic perception plays very significant role for composing poignant poems which embody severe afflictions of the poor. It is obvious that Swami Nem Pal has identified himself with the sufferings of the poor for realistic, pathetic expression of the horrible miseries of the poor. It seems that miseries of the poor themselves are narrating their own account of agonies.

Labourers work hard for a long time, even then they afford dry, hard pieces of stale bread only. Comforts dislike them. Semantically deviant phrase afflictions 'bale' is foregrounded in the poem. Noun word 'afflictions' carries + human + animate - concrete semantic features and its collocation with 'bale' having -human, +animate, +concrete semantic features causes semantic deviation or lexical inventiveness. Foregrounded phrase afflictions 'bale' connotes that labourers carry their own very bulky bundle of endless agonising suffering without the address of delivery. Linguistic deviation contributes emotive and poignant force of expression in a compact style. Poems on the afflictions and disgusting miseries of the farmers, the poor and the labourers are presented with great variety of expressions in Part-I of India Malcontent.

Deeply in his mind the trows

He entertains and feeds the guest

On boiled carrots and potatoes

The only food for him and best. (Pal 9)

An archaic or humorous word 'trow' is used for 'think' which suggests that the poor labourers can only contemplate their gloomy fate and cruel apathy of the society which they cannot change. They are deprived of the relish of grain-bread and they serve boiled carrots and potatoes even to their guests :

But look ! in miseries severe, deep

He has been by his leaders drowned

Who e'en toss not, carelessly sleep,

And o'er India woe hands around. (Pal 9)

Contemptible levity and fiendish selfishness of the leaders are exposed in the poem. Political devils the leaders have plunged India into great miseries. Synecdochic word India connotes miserable poor people of India. Leaders have been satirized bitterly in as much as

they do not take turn (toss) on their beds but sleep soundly. Leaders are utterly detached from the miseries of the poor, and they do not care for the development of the country:

In fog and mist skeletons move.

Hungry and naked, almost dead;

They by their sighs and murmurs prove

They have been by a mirage misled. (Pal 10)

The nicety of poet's creative imagination is praiseworthy for he conducts psychic surgery of his poetic characters in the same way as Robert Browning, through his wonderful dramatic monologues, has done in his famous poems - *The Last Ride Together* and *Andre-del Sarto*. The poet details the woeful condition of the poor labourers in emotive, picturesque imagery. Poverty keeps them naked and hungry, and they walk like skeletons in mist and fog. With their deep breath and slow voice, they repent of electing selfish and corrupt leaders whose vain promises beguiled them like a mirage.

The augean musty dunghills near

Emitting putredinous smell,

Would there the pestilences rear

And pester creatures in their cell. (Pal 12)

The above poem is remarkable for its Greek allusion which intensifies the extremity of disgusting smell. A point of great nicety relevant to poet's subtle linguistic skill is manifest in the extraordinary association of the Greek allusion - augean with musty dunghills. Adjective augean introduces the rare quality of the Greek legendary King Augeas. Webster's New World Dictionary clarifies that adjective 'augean' alludes to "the Greek legend of King Augeas or his stable, which held 3000 oxen and remained uncleaned for 30 years until Hercules cleaned it in one day by diverting a river (or two rivers) through it."

The association of words requires not only linguistic skill but contextual prudence. According to Herbert Read: "The quality of words is most determined by their associations. By their continued use in certain connection, words acquire an emotional surcharge of connotation." (Read 7) An allusion is a reference to another literary work, to history or to eminent persons,

but it cannot be appreciated until readers possess the awareness of the reference attached to it, "because it is tacit and fused with the context in which it appears." (Read 7)

The horrible stink emitted by the mountains of dunghills cannot be conveyed by words, therefore the poet adds the metaphorical allusion - augean to intensify the extremity of disgusting stench coming from the putrid dunghills. Poor farmers are aware of it that their living in squalid conditions may cause their death by pestilence at any time; even then they live in perils. The metaphorical phrase 'augean musty dunghills' stirs excessively two sense organs: olfactory (smell-nose) and visionary (eyes). In this way, the poet has projected admirably the horrors of disgusting living ways of the poor farmers.

Whole day they O'er the spade bend
Digging or levelling sun-baked earth
and thus they drudging in life contend
for a piece of bread-their labour's worth. (Pal 13)

The poet gives the details of the toil of labourers. By bending their backs, the labourers dig the hard, parched soil with a spade and level it whole of the day. It is very shocking that the earnings of their day long drudgery are too meagre to arrange a few pieces of bread.

Or they whole day in farms stand
Thrashing the straw, winnowing the grain;
The sun rays pricking would them brand
And they hang down, almost slain. (Pal 13)

This poem is invested with suggestive meanings. Metaphoric phrase 'ruined widows' suggests two situations: (i) that widows were physically assaulted and molested; (ii) that political promises were not fulfilled and the war-widows undergo severe agonies of privations. Widows are so helpless and sad that they frown at relating their stories of atrocities inflicted upon them in free India.

Confused present
Darkens our fates,
Future vehement

Disturbed awaits. (Pal 38)

At the first reading, there appears 'solecism'- an error in the use of language in the poem. Compressed feelings packed in these lines reflect linguistic deviations and foregrounding.

The collocation of abstract time noun 'present' (having- human- animate- concrete features) with adjective 'confused', carrying + human, + animate, abstract features causes semantic deviation. The semantic deviation personifies abstract noun 'present' and it implies the young generation that is annoyed by confusion. A pre-supposed situation in this poem is that the caste- preferential vote politics has aggravated the condition of unemployment and the fate of the youths is gloomy. The adjectival phrase 'disturbed awaits' accounts for grammatical deviation, because the word 'disturbed' is a participial adjective which requires a noun as a postmodifier. Grammatical deviation is related to the grammatical device termed as "enallage- the- interchange of one part of speech for another, noun for verb, adjective for verb, etc." (A.F. Scott 104) Leech terms 'enallage' as "FUNCTIONAL CONVERSION". (A.F. Scott 104) A normal word 'disturbance' should be placed in place of 'disturbed', but the participial a adjective 'disturbed' is more effective than 'disturbance'. The word 'disturbed' suggests thematically both agitated condition and patience (awaits) of the young generation that is burdened with confusion and dark future. It is obvious that linguistic deviations contribute to novelty of expression, compactness and multiplex layers of suggestive or symbolic meanings in poetry. On the contrary, linguistic deviations cause ambiguity in poetry for those readers who are unaware of the practical application of linguistics for the proper interpretation of deviant, innovative style in poetry.

There are 645 dimetric quatrains in Part - III of India Malcontent. The poet expresses his poetic courage of writing candid and protest poetry irrespective of slashing criticism. The poet addresses and encourages not only the youths but also common mass to live great ideals of life in society and politics. Poem number is put in parenthesis () followed by page number.

Let one oppose

Me and frustrate

My mental throes

Let me state. (Pal 40)

The poet avails himself of poetic liberty to ventilate his intellectual pangs of protest against shocking degeneration in society, politics and religion.

No tornado
No torture, greed,
No friend, no foe,
Can me misled. (Pal 42)

In suggestive language, the poet declares his poetic courage that no severe criticism, atrocities, friend, enemy and temptation can deviate him from the candid outpourings of protest in his poetry.

Vicious actions
Of mean rascals
Cherish factions
Grim upheavals. (Pal 43)

Evil ways of base politicians result in bribed defection, and depraved people rise in society and politics at the cost of insulting virtuous people. Such decadent milieu compels him to express his severe protest.

Element religious
Gave us arson,
Problems arduous
Country's division (Pal 57)

The poet resents against hypocrisy in religion. True religion never propagates violence, enmity in society, but modern religion tinged with shallow politics causes violent killings, arson and annoying disorder in the country.

Man chains himself
With attachment,
Power and pelf

Which ever torment. (Pal 64)

Philosophical touch is apparent in this poem. Strong desires for power and wealth annoy people. The use of 'pelf' - a contemptuous term for money connotes that people beg money and power but not blessings of God.

The religions' ghost

Renders us mad,

We look almost

Spiritually dead. (Pal 74)

Religion is rightly compared to ghost. When a person is possessed by evil spirit or ghost, he loses common sense and acts like a mad. Religion deprives a person of rational thoughts and he blindly follows mythical practices. Spiritual death of a person is observed when he does not practice love, fraternity, peace, non-violence.

The religion dress

Themselves with a lore

Spiritual less

Political more (Pal 59)

Religious faiths are based on mythological anecdotes which are not justifiable by science, so politicians mould religion to their selfish, base ends. Religion minted by politicians harms country and separates man from man.

Are now religions

Despicable

Like sinful nuns

Hyporrite's will (Pal 45)

The poet does not question about the importance of religion but he hates sham religions. The phrase 'sinful nuns' suggests many situations. A nun commits sin when she falls into immoral ways or prefers materialistic gains to selfless service of mankind. Religious priests or gurus

(masters) have become the traders of religion as they give importance to millionaires, live in great luxuries and ignore the piety of an ordinary person. Religions founded on monetary gains are detestable like impious nuns, and such religions cannot be relied like a will of a liar.

God we worship
And man we hate,
To a grave we slip
From height straight. (Pal 87)

The crass absurdity of religious persons is ridiculed in this poem. God loves all- poor and rich, literate and illiterate. It is a disgusting irrationality of those persons who worship God but hate mankind. To hate man and love God is to fall from heaven into hell.

Baleful hatred
Malevolence deep,
Ill will rancid
In feeling creep. (Pal 90)

Crude psychology of modern society is revealed in this poem. Feelings of modern people reek of enmity, injurious hate and spite. People with negative feelings can never build a healthy society. Negative feelings are the useless dregs of behaviour that incite a man to commit horrible crimes.

Self- interest more
Common good less
Fill leader's core
'Tis their greatness. (338) P. 95.

Ironical character of selfish leader is drawn in sarcastic tone. Indian political leaders sustain parochial vision as they take care of themselves. The thought of the welfare of others can never be the throb of their heart and mind. Leaders take too much interest in their own life, even then they brag of their greatness, vain glory.

Of commercial fuss

Language, religion

Are problems thus

Leaders creation. (Pal 96)

The poet has drawn an inventory of malevolent activities of leaders that cause harmful rifts among various societies. On the matters of language, religion and community, leaders foment unnecessary nervous excitement among people and cause massive dissatisfaction and disorder in the nation.

Ideal : Satyam

Shivam, Sundaram

In her bossom

Will e'er blossom. (Pal 131)

Swami New Pal puts much emphasis upon cultivating the ideal of scriptures: Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, that is, the truth, the good, the beautiful. The poet addresses youngmen and urges them to translate this ideal into their behaviour. This ethical triad can be interpreted thus. The truth is the yardstick of the good (Shivam) and the beautiful (Sundaram). People should do good for others and they should forsake corruption and immorality in order to make, the world beautiful. Virtues are not medicines to be administered but virtues require sincere efforts for cultivating them into habits.

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